

Qin and Han Dynasties

# CHINA

221-206 BCE

# QIN DYNASTY

## UNIFICATION OF CHINA

- ✘ Qin = superior warring state from Warring States Period (see Ch 3)
- ✘ Qin conquered various neighbors and rivals
  - + By 221 BCE, all of northern/central China unified under Qin
  - + Creation of the first Chinese Empire



## QIN SHI HUANGDI

- ✘ Ascended the throne in 246 BCE at age of 13 under the name Zheng
- ✘ Shi Huangdi means "First Emperor"
  - + Claimed his dynasty would last for 1000 years
  - + Central administration of the empire with Legalist principles and policies
- ✘ Reform
  - + Abolition of primogeniture
    - ✘ Passing of all land to eldest son
    - ✘ New laws requiring land to be divided among several heirs
- ✘ Standardization
  - + Weights, measures, coinage, writing, law
  - + Help unified diverse groups



## LI SI AND LEGALISM

- ✘ Li Si = Prime Minister
- ✘ Convinced Shi Huangdi that scholars were “subverting the goals of the regime”
- ✘ Felt that the Confucian morals were in direct opposition of a ruler’s absolute power
- ✘ Crackdown on Confucians and Confucian traditions
  - + Burned Confucian books
  - + Killed Confucian scholars



## EXTERNAL THREATS FROM XIONGNU

- ✘ Nomads on the northern border of the empire
  - + At times, peaceful trade between nomads and Chinese farmers
  - + Other times, nomads raided villages
- ✘ Chinese response
  - + Began building walls to keep out invaders
  - + Began training mounted soldiers (cavalry)
- ✘ Shi Huangdi's response
  - + Send soldiers to drive nomads from empire
  - + Connected/extended existing walls around empire
    - ✘ Precursor to Great Wall
- ✘ Huangdi's aggression caused nomads to band together and create the Xiongnu Confederacy
  - + The Xiongnu would continue to cause problems for China for hundreds of years





**Gold Belt Buckle, Xiongnu, Second Century B.C.E.**

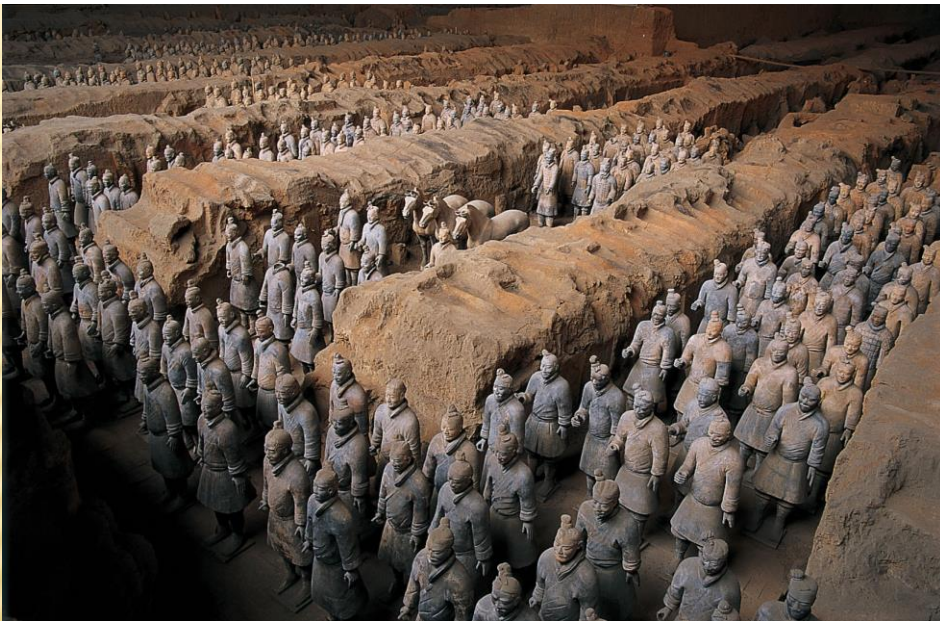
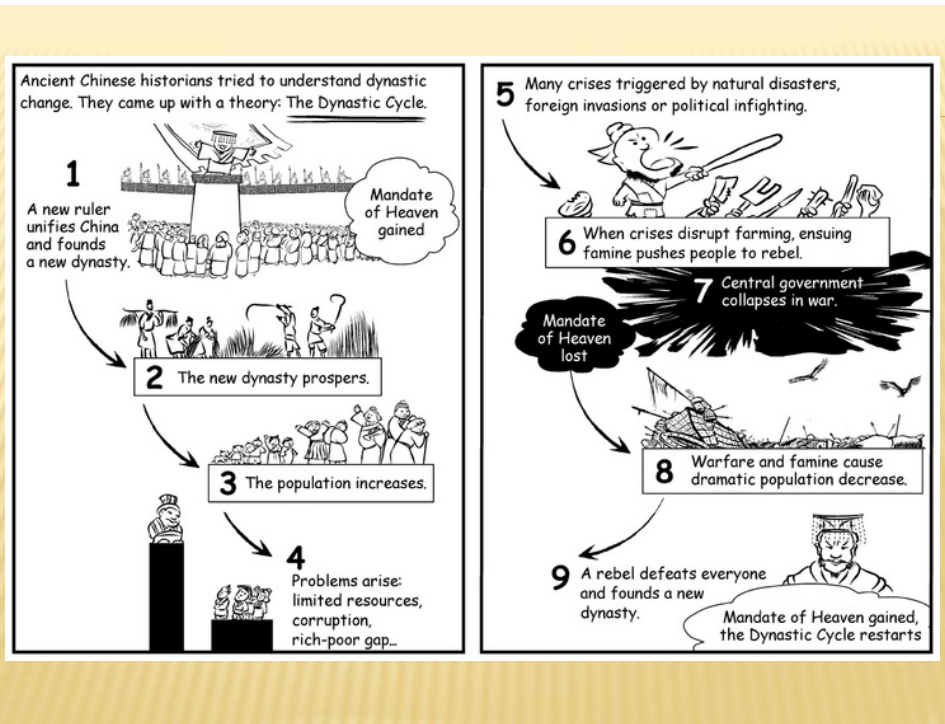
The Xiongnu, herders in the lands north of China, shared the artistic conventions of nomadic peoples across the steppes of Asia and eastern Europe, such as this fluid, twisting representation of the animals on which they depended for their livelihood. Shi Huangdi's military incursion into their pasturelands in the late third century B.C.E. catalyzed the formation of the Xiongnu Confederacy, whose horse-riding warriors challenged the Chinese for centuries. **p. 168**

## FALL OF THE QIN

- ✘ Oppressive policies
  - + Mandatory military service
  - + Forced labor for roads, walls, buildings
- ✘ The Terra Cotta Army
  - + Huangdi's elaborate tomb that mimicked China's geography
  - + 7000 life sized terra cotta soldiers to guard the afterlife
- ✘ Huangdi's successors were weak and the dynasty collapsed after only a few years



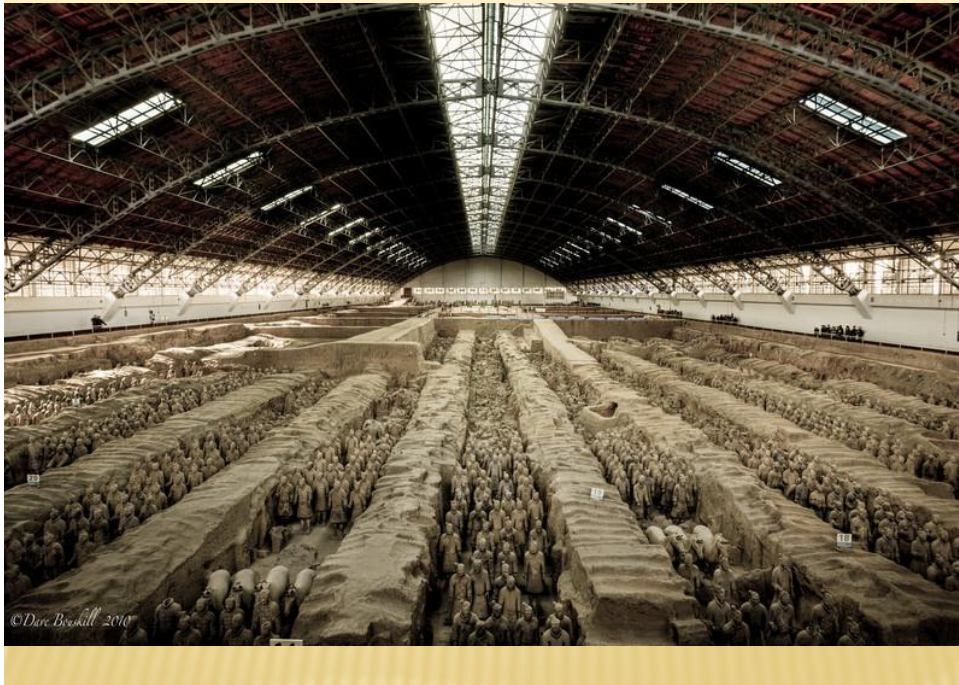




**Terracotta Soldiers from the Tomb of Shi Huangdi, "First Emperor" of China, Late Third Century B.C.E.**

Near the monumental tomb that he built for himself, the First Emperor filled a huge underground chamber with more than seven thousand life-sized baked-clay statues of soldiers. The terracotta army was unearthed in the 1970s.

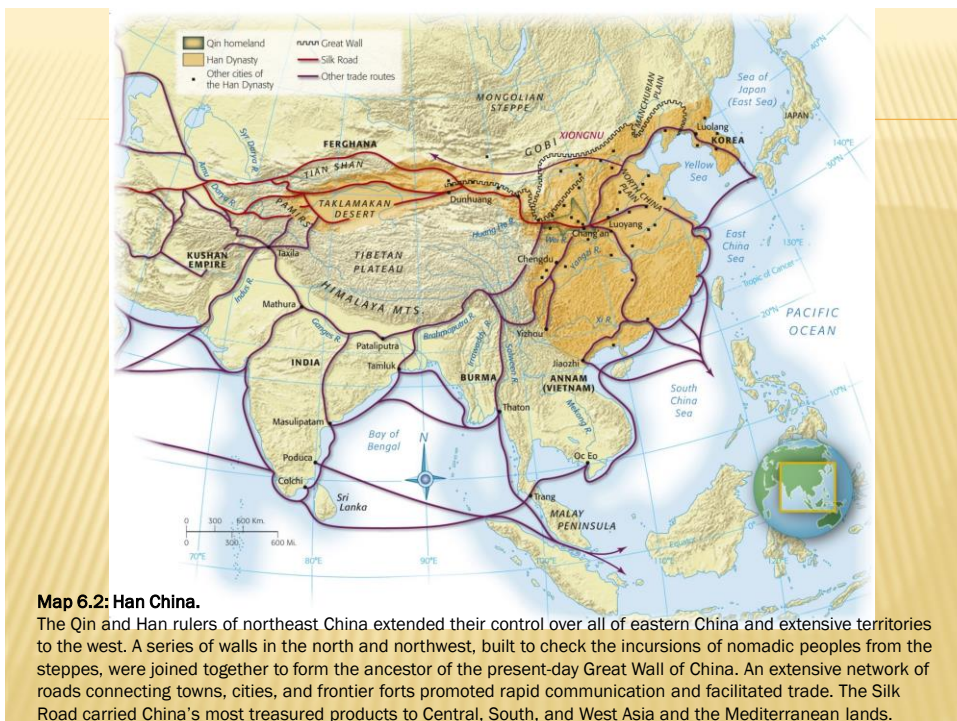
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202 BCE – 220 CE

# THE HAN DYNASTY





**GAOZU**

- ✘ First emperor of the Han Dynasty
- ✘ Denounced extreme Qin policies, but retained Legalist institutions
- ✘ Adopted an appeasement policy when dealing with Xiongnu
  - + “gifts” (aka bribes) to buy safety

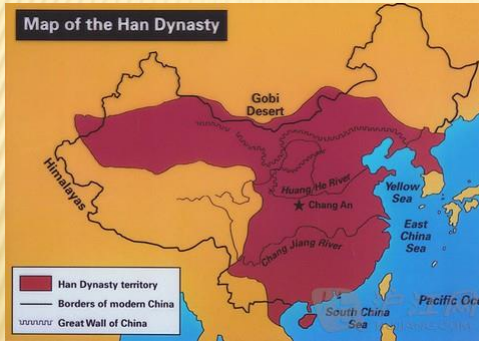
**WU**

- ✘ Substantially increased the power of the emperor
- ✘ Increased size of empire
- ✘ Abandoned Xiongnu appeasement
  - + Built up Chinese military
  - + By first century CE the Xiongnu had disbanded
- ✘ Expensive wars caused Wu to establish monopolies on salt, iron, alcohol

**EARLY EMPERORS****CONFUCIANISM**

- ✘ Adopted by the Han as the “official ideology” of the empire
- ✘ Confucian university
  - + Chang’an (capital)
  - + Confucian scholar exam for official positions

## CHANG'AN



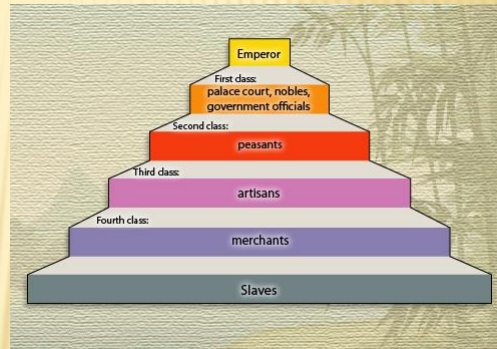
- ✗ Modern Xi'an
- ✗ Surrounded by a wall
- ✗ Carefully planned with roads, imperial compound, homes/buildings
- ✗ Model of urban planning
- ✗ Dichotomy of elite and poor
  - + Elite live in lavish homes
  - + Poor live "as closely as the teeth of a comb"

## SOCIETY

- ✗ Patriarchal
- ✗ Family = fundamental social unit
  - + Included living AND ancestral spirits
  - + Ancestor veneration
  - + Sons favored over daughters
  - + Filial piety (Confucianism)
- ✗ Women
  - + Cook, take care of family, make clothes
  - + Submit to males
  - + Arranged marriages
- ✗ Ban Zhao
  - + "Lessons for Women"

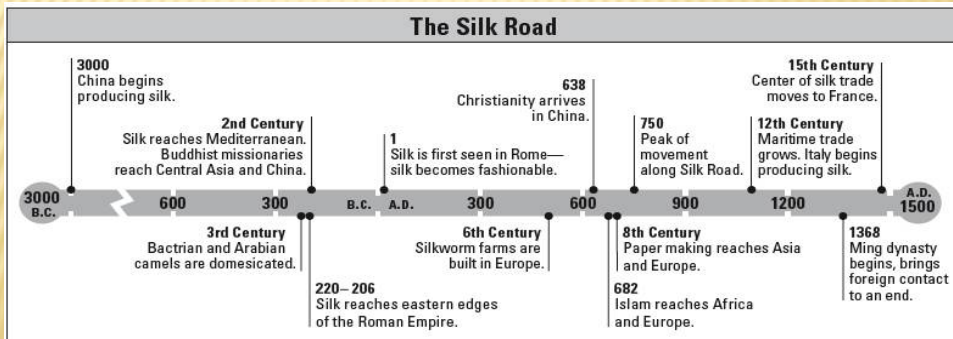
## SOCIAL CLASSES

- ✗ Gentry
  - + Scholar officials
  - + Confucian
  - + Exempt from taxes, military/labor service
  - + Became a privileged class
- ✗ Merchants
  - + Some wealthy
  - + Viewed as being greedy parasites
  - + Blamed for China's problems on occasion



## TECHNOLOGY

- ✗ Astrology/Observation of celestial bodies
- ✗ Watermill
- ✗ Horse collar
  - + Heavier loads could be pulled by horses
- ✗ Paper by 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE
- ✗ Crossbow trigger
- ✗ Roads that traversed the empire
  - + Similar to Roman Road
- ✗ Canal system





## RELIGION

- ✘ Based in nature
- ✘ Ghosts/spirits
- ✘ Daoism
  - + Alchemy
    - ✘ Turn common items into precious metals
  - + Challenged Chinese tradition and led to uprisings
- ✘ Buddhism
  - + Originated in India in 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE
  - + Arrival in China c. 1<sup>st</sup> century CE
  - + Spread via Silk Road
  - + Opposed traditional values of children and the family
  - + Eventually changed to fit Chinese traditions

## FALL OF THE HAN (220 CE)

- ✘ Yellow River
  - + Flood caused river to change course
  - + Many deaths
  - + Economy destroyed
  - + Widespread poverty
- ✘ 25 CE: capital moved to Luoyang
- ✘ Corrupt officials, weak leaders, poverty

